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IN RE:)
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ATMOS ENERGY)
CORPORATION, PETITION FOR)
APPROVAL OF TARIFF 2ND REVISED)
SHEET NOS. 59 AND 60 RELATIVE TO)
SOFT CLOSE PROGRAM)

DOCKET NO. 03-00241

TN REGULATORY AUTHORITY
DOCKET ROOM

PETITION BY ATMOS ENERGY CORPORATION
FOR APPROVAL OF TARIFF 2ND REVISED SHEET NOS. 59 AND 60
RELATIVE TO SOFT CLOSE PROGRAM

Atmos Energy Corporation ("Atmos" or the "Company"), files this petition seeking approval of 2nd Revised Sheet Nos. 59 and 60 of its tariff, attached as collective Exhibit A to this Petition. The proposed change specifically permits the Company to "soft close" the account of any residential customers requesting service termination. Soft close refers to the temporary closing of an account and the cessation of billing without physically disconnecting service to the premise in order to facilitate initiating service to the next residential customer at that location. When a soft close occurs, the Company obtains a final meter reading as of the termination date, and continues to read the meter in the normal manner to monitor consumption. Neither the customer terminating service nor the customer initiating service thereafter at the same premise will be liable for any gas metered while the premise is under soft close. A premise may remain under soft close until 500 Ccf or 5 Mcf of gas has registered through the meter since the previous customer's termination, or for 45 days, whichever occurs first. The proposed soft close procedure that will be added to the Company's Operations and Maintenance Manual upon approval of this Petition is attached hereto as Exhibit B.

Atmos proposes that the soft close tariff become effective 60 days from the date of this filing, which would give the tariff an effective date of May 27, 2003. Atmos would show that

this proposed revision is consistent with industry practice, Authority regulations and federal safety standards. The proposed revision will allow Atmos to utilize its resources more efficiently, and is beneficial to the customers.

Respectfully submitted,

BAKER, DONELSON, BEARMAN
& CALDWELL, P.C.

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that a true and correct copy of the foregoing has been served via U.S. Mail, postage prepaid, to the following this 23rd day of March, 2003:

Sara Kyle
Chairman
Tennessee Regulatory Authority
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, TN 37243-0505

Patricia J. Childers
Vice President, Regulatory Affairs
United Cities Gas Corporation
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Richard Collier
Jon N. Wike
Tennessee Regulatory Authority
460 James Robertson Parkway
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Glynn Blanton
Chief, Gas Pipeline Safety Division
Tennessee Regulatory Authority
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Paul G. Summers
Timothy C. Phillips
Shelia B. Chatterjee
Russell T. Perkins
Office of the Attorney General
Consumer Advocate Division
P.O. Box 20207
Nashville, TN 37202

_____

GENERAL RULES AND REGULATIONS (Continued)

5. Discontinuance and Restoration of Service

- 5.1 The Company may discontinue or refuse to establish or restore gas service for any of the reasons listed below. However, service shall not be discontinued unless a reasonable prior notice is provided to a Customer and discontinuance shall not occur on a day or a date preceding a day or days on which the Company is not open for business and available to reconnect the discontinued service as provided herein.
- (a) Without notice in the event of a condition determined by the Company to be hazardous.
 - (b) Without notice in the event of Customer's use of equipment in such a manner as to adversely affect the Company's equipment or its service to others.
 - (c) Without notice if there is evidence of tampering with the equipment furnished and owned by the Company.
 - (d) Without notice if there is evidence of unauthorized use.
 - (e) For violation of and/or non-compliance with the Company's rules on file with and approved by the Tennessee Regulatory Authority.
 - (f) For failure of the Customer to fulfill this obligations for service and/or facilities subject to regulations by the Tennessee Regulatory Authority.
 - (g) For failure of the Customer to permit the Company reasonable access to its equipment.
 - (h) For non-payment of delinquent account.
 - (i) For failure of the Customer to provide the Company with a deposit.

5.2 Discontinuance at Customer's Request

When a Customer desires to terminate gas service, such Customer shall notify the Company not less than three (3) days in advance, or such period in advance as is specified in the Customer's contract, and state the date on which such Customer wishes service to be terminated. A Customer may be held responsible for all gas service furnished at the premises until the date of termination specified in the notice, or a date three (3) days beyond the date of such notice, or such greater number of days after notice as are specified in a contract, whichever date is later. Restoration of service following temporary termination of service at Customer's request will be made upon payment by Customer of a reconnection charge as provided herein.

GENERAL RULES AND REGULATIONS (Continued)

The Company may "soft close" the account of any residential Customer requesting service termination. Soft close is the closing of a residential Customer's account in order to cease billing without physically disconnecting service to the premise in order to facilitate initiating service for the next residential Customer at the same premise. The Company's procedure for "soft close" is set forth in the Company's Operation and Maintenance Manual on file with the Tennessee Regulatory Authority. Field personnel will obtain a final meter reading as of the termination date. Neither the Customer terminating service nor the Customer initiating service shall be liable for any gas metered while the premise is under soft close. The Company will continue to meter and read consumption at a premise under soft close in the normal manner. If more than 500 Ccf or 5 Mcf of gas has registered through the meter or after 45 days and the premise is vacant, service will be terminated and a "hard close" will occur.

5.3 Restoration of Service; Reconnection Charge; Returned Check Charge

Service which is discontinued by the Company for Customer's nonpayment of bills, failure to comply with applicable service regulations, or at Customer's request may be restored upon payment by Customer of all indebtedness for gas service and a reconnection charge which shall be \$35.00 for reconnection during regular office hours. When the Customer pays by check is returned to the Company marked NSF (Not Sufficient Funds) the Customer will be assessed a charge of \$20.00.

5.4 Limitations on Discontinuance

Gas service to any Customer will not be terminated without reasonable prior notice and the Customer being given reasonable opportunity to dispute the reasons for such termination.

- (a) Prior reasonable notice will be sent to a Customer informing of the date of any proposed termination of service unless such Customer takes appropriate action. The date of the proposed termination shall be at least seven (7) days after the Company sends the notice by first class mail.
- (b) The Company shall postpone the physical termination of gas service to a residential Customer for a period of thirty (30) days in the event a physician, public health officer, or social service official certifies in writing that discontinuation of service will aggravate an existing medical emergency of the Customer or other permanent resident of the premises where service is rendered. The Company shall refer the Customer or other permanent resident of the premises to social service agencies for investigation, confirmation of need and guarantee of payment. The Company shall supply



Soft Close Procedure

Soft closure provides a method, which allows the transfer of active gas service from one party to another at the same location over a period of time with no actual disconnection or interruption of service. This standard is written to apply to Class I residential meters and accounts, but may be used in other circumstances as deemed necessary.

At a customer's request to terminate gas service, the CSA will:

- Verify the date of termination
- Inform customer gas service may be left on and to lower all thermostats, inquire about operating status of gas appliances, and, request all gas lines be properly capped and plugged if appliances will be removed
(See CSC Script, Attachment 1)
- Issue a FINL service order to field personnel in order to Obtain a final meter reading as of the termination date
- The Service Tech receiving service order will follow protocol as outlined in completion of service order
- A follow up usage verification will occur on or within the next regularly scheduled reading of the meter (not to exceed 30 days)

Once a field service order is received, the service tech will:

- Verify the address and meter number from the service order
- Determine that the Premise is safe to soft close.
(See Service Tech procedures, Attachment 2)
- Verify if the meter lock stop is positioned off or on
- Complete the field service order appropriately



If the service tech verifies gas service to be ON, he/she will:

- Leave the gas meter on
- Record meter reading on the field service order form
- Designate the FINL order to be in "Soft Close" by selecting the soft close indicator on the MDT
- Leave a tag on the building's door to notify others that gas *is* ON
(See Door Tag Language Attachment 3)

If the service tech verifies gas service to be OFF he/she will:

- Lock / Blind Plate / Secure the Meter
- Record the meter reading on the field service order form
- Complete the FINL order

Note: The service tech should always monitor field conditions for safety and can terminate gas service anytime at their discretion.

Follow-up:

- During follow-up, field personnel (service tech, meter reader... etc) will verify if a tenant has moved into the location.
- If there are indications of a new tenant, field personnel will "tag" the front door with a 48 hour notice for the new tenant to establish active gas service, notify the local OA to schedule a turn off order to meet the 48 hour notice.
- If more than 5 mcf or 50 ccf of gas has registered through the meter and the premise is vacant, the service tech will terminate gas service in accordance with with Utility Operations Handbook Section: Customer Service, Subject: Turn Off Procedures; and complete the field service order appropriately.

Conclusion:

- The account remains in the soft closure status until either 45-calendar days pass or the meter registers 50 ccf or 5 Mcf gas consumption.
- A "Hard Close" (HCLS) service order will be generated.
- Service Tech will verify the address and meter number from the field service order
- Terminate gas service at address
- Complete the field service order appropriately



Attachment 1
Soft Close Script & Checklist

Mr/Mrs _____, I have scheduled the service order to have your service at _____
finalized on _____.

(Service location is in a state that currently performs Soft Close) When the service technician works the order, he will read the meter and your account will be finalized at that reading. You will not be charged for any gas usage past that reading. We may actually leave the gas turned on. We do this so that the service will already be available when the new tenant moves in. *(do not use the term "soft close" with the customer – this is a term used when company employees are communicating with each other)*

- ♦ *(give customer instructions)* To ensure a safe situation and to minimize the gas used after we read the meter, there are a few steps we would like for you to take.
- ♦ Please lower all thermostats to their lowest setting and put any other gas appliances in the "off" position. If you need to remove any gas appliances, you should cap off any open lines that do not have cut-off valves.

(service location is in a state that does not perform Soft Close) When the service technician works the order, he will read the meter and your account will be finalized at that reading. You will not be charged for any gas usage past that reading. If we have not already been contacted by any new tenant or the landlord, our service technician will turn the meter off to stop the flow of natural gas.

I would also like to give you a confirmation number for your order – are you able to take this number down? Your confirmation number is _____. Please be sure to have this number available if you call back with any further questions.

Did You Remember To?:

Check for a Default Customer (look for the "Y" at the bottom of the Move In/Out S O Generation form)

Give the customer "Soft Close" instructions (where appropriate)

Give customer the confirmation (service order) number

Make notes on Service Order (as appropriate)

FINL per _____ (caller's name) (include contact phone number, if available)

Default Cust – S/C only

Gave S/C instructions

No Default Cust

Your Agent Id # & first initial/last name.



Attachment 2

Soft Close: Service Technician Procedure / Discretion at Premise (Steps to determine whether to "softclose or hardclose")

- Is the house vacant, or show recent activity?
- Is this typical rental property?
 1. Is there a high occupant turnover rate?
 2. Also rely on local technician's knowledge of the history of the property.
- Condition of property:
 1. Is property in disrepair or condemned?
 2. Is there a history of vandalism or stolen gas/meters in the area?
 3. Is this a high crime area?
- Check test hand for high consumption
 1. Will meter move 50 ccf before next reading?
 2. Forecast of weather conditions.
 3. Gas appliances in use or potential condition of equipment or house piping.
- Is there a history of bad debt at the premise?



Attachment 3
Soft Close Door Tag Language

For your convenience
GAS IS ON
TEMPORARILY

Call our office within 48 hours to avoid service interruption.

If you smell a gas odor, do not light a match or operate any electrical appliance or switches. Leave the building and call 1-888-363-7427.

If you need to remove or install any gas appliances call our office to turn off the gas meter.

Call 1-888-363-7427 anytime to have the gas service put in your name.

Your safety is the most important thing to us!

Note: this notification tag would be yellow with black print. The size of the tag would be 3 3/4" wide x 7 1/2 long.